

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

Awakened India

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Arise ! Awake ! and stop not till the goal is reached !

Katha. Upa. I. iii. 4

No. 34, MAY 1899

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Prabuddha Bharata

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THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

Advanced proofs of a pamphlet shortly to be issued by the Prabuddha Bharata Press, being the full report of a lecture delivered in New York on the 8th January 1899, by the Swami Abhedananda.

THE worship of God as the Mother of the universe, as our Divine Mother is unknown to the people of the West.

Since the introduction of Christianity into Europe, the conception of God as the Creator and Father of the universe, has been preached by all the theologians and priests of the whole of Christendom. Jesus, the founder of Christianity, worshipped God as his father, and prayed to Him as the father of the universe; consequently, those who follow Jesus and his teachings, are bound to worship God through the same relation, which was established by their Master. The relation between father and son, is much higher than the relation between the creator and his creatures, or between the master and his servant. The more we advance in spirituality and approach nearer to God, the closer and nearer becomes our relation to Him. The worship of God is impossible without having some kind of relation between the worshipper and the object of worship.

In Hebrew religion, God (Jehovah) was conceived of as the creator, ruler, and governor of the universe. He was like the most powerful and despotic monarch. All creatures were related to Jehovah, as subjects to their ruler. As a ruler punishes his disobedient subjects, so Jehovah punished those who disobeyed Him or His laws. The duty of a subject was almost the same as that of a slave to his master. As a slave serves his

master through fear of punishment, so the Hebrews served Jehovah. The transition from such a relation to that of a father to a son was indeed a grand step. It was no longer an eternal relation to power and strength, but it became a kind of kinship, a kind of internal or blood-relation, which exists between the earthly father and his son. There is a tie of love which binds a son to his father. It brings the individual soul much nearer to the creator of the universe. As the earthly father of an individual is ordinarily considered to be his creator, because of his begetting him and bringing him into existence out of nothing, so when the undeveloped human mind began to think of the creation of the universe, it imagined that the creator was one who begot the universe and produced it out of nothing. Consequently the creator became the father of the universe.

All our conceptions of God begin with anthropomorphism, *i. e.* (by giving God human attributes in an immensely magnified degree,) and end in de-anthropomorphism *i. e.* by making Him free from all human attributes. At the first stage of our conception of God, He appears to us as an extra-cosmic Being, as the creator of the universe, Who is separate from and dwells outside of the universe just as a carpenter is separate from the chair or table which he makes, or like the father who is separate from the son

whom he creates. The Hebrew conception of Jehovah was purely anthropomorphic. He was an extra-cosmic Being. He was dwelling in a heaven outside of the universe and possessing all human attributes. He created the universe out of nothing and fashioned it and became its ruler. The same Jehovah when considered as the Father of the universe by Jesus and His followers, did not lose His extra-cosmic nature. Even today the majority of the Christians cannot go beyond this idea of an extra-cosmic God. They worship the same extra-cosmic Jehovah, the creator of the universe, as their Father. Jehovah is always masculine. He is never described as feminine.

According to the Hebrews the masculine element of nature possessed all activity, strength and power; the male principle was recognised as the generator, and the female principle of nature was thought to be lower, insignificant, powerless, and passive. She was the producer and bearer of what the male principle created. Consequently every thing that represented the female principle was considered as nothing. This explains why womanhood was considered so low both by the writers of the Old and the New Testaments, especially by the great apostle to the Gentiles, the disciple of Jesus. Even the very appearance and existence of woman on earth depended upon a man's *rib* according to the Genesis. Although the creator was represented by the Hebrews as masculine and all-powerful, yet when they explained the genesis of the world, they could not deny the existence of the feminine element, which helped the creator in bringing life into existence. In the Mosaic account of genesis we read that "The spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters." Which literally means that the creator impregnated the waters or the female element of nature. And as God, *i. e.* the male element was extra cosmic, outside

of nature, and possessed all activity and power, He became the object of worship, and the female element or nature was entirely ignored. Every Christian admits the existence of nature, the female principle; but she has never been worshipped or adored. The idea of Father grew stronger and stronger and the mother nature was left aside as passive and powerless, and was ultimately ignored. As long as the conception of God will remain extra-cosmic, as separate from nature, which is passive, so long will He appear as Father alone.

But the more we comprehend God as immanent and resident in Nature, the more clearly we understand that God is our Father as well as our Mother.

When we see that Nature or the feminine principle is inseparable from the Being or the masculine element, when we realise that Nature is not passive and powerless but the Divine energy, then we understand that God is one stupendous whole in whom exist both the masculine and feminine principles. Then we no longer separate Nature from God but on the other hand we recognise Nature as a part of the manifested Divine energy.

The tendency of modern science is towards that end. The doctrine of evolution, correlation of forces, persistence of energy, all these clearly prove that the phenomena of the whole universe and the various forces of the external and internal world are but the expressions of one eternal energy. The theory of evolution explains only the mode in which that eternal energy produces this phenomenal universe. Science has disproved the old theory of creation out of nothing, through the fiat of an extra-cosmic God; on the other hand she has shown that something can never come out of nothing. Science teaches that the universe existed before creation in a potential state in that energy and gradually through the process of evolution the whole potentiality has become kinetic or actual. That eternal

energy is not an unintelligent energy; but *she is intelligent*. Wherever we cast our eyes either in the external or internal world, we find the expression not of a fortuitous or accidental combination of matter and mechanical forces, but of regular laws guided by definite purpose. This universe is not a chaos but a cosmos, one harmonious whole. It is not an aimless chain of changes which we call evolution but there is some orderly hidden purpose at every step of evolution. Therefore that energy is intelligent. We may call this self-existing, intelligent, eternal cosmic energy, the Mother of the universe. She is the source of infinite forces and infinite phenomena. This eternal energy is called in Sanskrit, *Prakriti*, Latin *Procreatrix*, the creative power of the universe.

*Tvam parā Prakritih sākshāt Brahmanah
paramātmanah,
Tvatto jātam jagat sarvam tvam jagat
jananī Shivē.*

“Thou art the *Parā Prakriti* or the divine energy of the Supreme Being. Of Thee is born every thing of the universe, therefore Thou art the Mother of the universe.” All, all the forces of Nature are but the manifestations of this Divine energy. She is called all powerful. Wherever there is the expression of any force or power in the universe, there is the manifestation of the eternal *Prakriti* or the Divine Mother. It is more appropriate to call that energy *mother* than *father*, because like a mother, that energy holds within her the germ of the phenomenal universe before creation, develops and sustains it, projects it on space and preserves it when it is born. She is the Mother of the trinity, creator, preserver and destroyer. She is the source of all activity. She is the *Sakti i. e.* force in action. A creator, when deprived of his creative power, is no longer the creator. As the creative power is one of the expressions of that eternal energy, so the creator or *Brahma* is looked

upon by the Hindus as the child of the universal Divine Mother; so is the preserver and the destroyer. The Hindus have understood this eternal energy as the Mother of the universe and have worshipped Her from prehistoric times; from the Vedic period. Here you must remember that this divine energy is not the same as the powerless and passive nature, which was rejected and ignored by the Hebrews and the Christians. You must not mistake this worship of the Divine Mother for *Nature-worship*. In the *Rig Veda* the most ancient of the Hindu Scriptures we read:—The Mother Divine says: “I am the Queen of the universe, the giver of all wealth and fruits of works. I am intelligent and omniscient. Although I am one, by My powers I appear as manifold. I cause war for protecting men, I kill the enemy and bring peace on earth. I stretch out heaven and earth. I have produced the Father. As the wind blows by itself, so I produce all phenomena by My own will. I am independent and responsible to none. I am beyond the sky, beyond this earth, My glory is the phenomenal universe; such am I by My power.” Thus we see the Divine Mother is all in all. We live and move and have our existence in that Divine Mother. Who can live for a moment if that eternal energy ceases to manifest? All our mental and physical activity depends on Her. She is doing whatever She wants to do. She makes one appear good or spiritual and divine, while it is She, Who makes another appear as wicked and sinful. It is through Her power we perform virtuous deeds or commit sinful acts. But She is beyond good and evil, beyond virtue and vice. Her forces are neither good nor evil, but they appear so to us when we look at them from different standpoints and compare them to one another.

When that all pervading Divine energy manifests, She is expressed in two sets of oppo-

site forces: the one set has the tendency towards God. It is called *Vidyâ* in Sanskrit. And the other tends towards the world. It is *Avidyâ*. The one leads to freedom and happiness, and the other to bondage and suffering. The one is knowledge, the other is ignorance. The one is light, the other is darkness. Each individual mind is the centre where these opposite forces are constantly working and fighting with one another. When *Vidyâ* or the powers, which lead Godward predominate, we advance towards God, become religious, spiritual and unselfish; and when its opposite the *Avidyâ* power prevails we become worldly, selfish and wicked. When the former prevails the latter is overcome and *vice versa*. These powers exist in each individual, though they vary in the degree of their strength in each. The man or woman, in whom the former *i. e.* the Godward-leading-powers prevail, is called devotional, prayerful, righteous, pure in heart, unselfish and so forth. These qualities are the outward expressions of the powers. But those powers are latent in all who do not possess such qualities. Such persons can rouse those latent powers if they practise devotion, prayer, righteousness, purity, unselfishness and so forth. The easiest way of attaining these powers is the worship of the *Vidyâ Sakti* or that aspect of the Divine Mother or Divine energy which represents all the powers which lead to spiritual perfection. By worship or devotion we mean *constant remembrance* of that aspect. If we *constantly* think of and pay attention to the source of all spirituality and all the higher powers which make one spiritual, surely, those powers will be aroused in us, and we shall become spiritual. Therefore the Hindus worship, this *Vidyâ Sakti*.

When they worship that aspect, they do not deny, or ignore the opposite aspect which leads to worldliness, but they make it subor-

ordinate to the former, *i. e.* the higher *Vidyâ* aspect. Sometimes they think each of these opposite forces separately, personify them and make them the female attendants of the Divine Mother. The Divine Mother has many attendants. All the evil forces of nature are Her attendants. She stands in the centre of the universe radiant in her own glory like the sun when surrounded on all sides by thick dark clouds.

Wherever there is any expression of extraordinary righteousness and spirituality there is special manifestation of the Divine Mother. There is Her incarnation. The Divine mother incarnates sometimes in the form of a man, and sometimes in the form of a woman, in order to establish order and righteousness. All men and women are her children. But there is something more in woman. As woman represents motherhood on earth, therefore all women, whether married or unmarried, are representatives of that Almighty Divine Mother of the universe. It is for this reason women are so highly revered and honoured by the Hindus. India is the only country in the world where God the Supreme Being is worshipped in the form of a woman as the Divine Mother of the universe. India is the only country where the earthly mother is looked upon as the Living Deity, and where a man learns in his childhood that *one mother is greater than a thousand fathers*. You have heard many stories regarding the condition of women in India, most of them are grossly exaggerated, some are utterly false and some are partially true. We have no time to discuss those points today, but so far I can assure you, that you will not find any other country where every living mother—as Sir Monier Williams says—is venerated as a kind of Deity by her children, where every village or city has its special guardian mother called in Sanskrit *Mātā*. It is extremely difficult for a Western mind to grasp exactly what the

Hindus mean by the Divine Mother. A very simple illustration will give you an idea of what respect the Hindus have for women. In Sanskrit when two names are used together, the rule of grammar is, that the more honourable should stand first. When we say in Sanskrit men and women, we should say women and men instead; instead of father and mother, we say mother and father, instead of husband and wife, we say wife and husband, and so forth. Because a woman is always more honourable than a man. In India the wives do not adopt their husband's name, they do not merge their individuality into their husbands' as they do in the West, but

they keep their own name separate. If a wife's name be Râdhâ, and her husband's name be Krishna, and if we say them together we should say Râdha-Krishna and never Krishna-Râdhâ. The wife's name must be said first. So is Sitâ-Râma, Sitâ is the wife and Rama is the husband. Again, when God incarnates in the human form such as Krishna or Rama, His wife also will be worshipped as the incarnation of the Mother. The wife will be worshipped first and then the husband. How can a Western mind appreciate this wonderful reverence for womanhood which the Hindus have?

THE INDIVIDUAL

The Father and I are one.—*Jesus*.

That which exists is One: sages call it variously.—*Rig-Veda*.

THE Individual is the indivisible Unit of Existence, the One Life in all of its myriad forms, the Supreme Self of man in his innumerable disguises, the Absolute in its robe of relativity.

The Individual is the Unit of change, of sequence, of relationship; the Identity which pervades and unites all existence in One.

The individual is the Soul of the Universe: nature its flowing vesture.

The Individual is the one all-embracing principle *Love*, whose negative expression is Law.

The Individual is "the one God hidden in all beings, all pervading, the Self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only One."

"Individuality in its highest form"

says Caird, "is not merely negative and exclusive, but also positive and inclusive, it is not merely the consciousness of a self in opposition to other things and beings, but also the consciousness of a self in relation to and unity with them" The Individual is therefore both the lower and the higher self of man, the personality and its inspiring principle.

Much confusion of thought has arisen through the misuse of the two terms "individuality" and "personality," the one being commonly used for the other as though they were interchangeable or synonymous.

The "personality" is man in his negative aspect, the expression of, and the creature of law. It is the mask, the form, everchanging, in which the real man is disguised. It is to man what the wave

is to the ocean, a mode of activity, the fleeting form that comes and goes, the garment of Divinity.

The "individuality" is the permanent quality, residing in the everchanging qualities in man, the character in its setting of transient moods.—Individuality includes personality and guides it through the operation of law which we term experience. It is man reflecting upon the negative and positive nature of his own being.

The universe is the process of individualization by which man realizes his own nature. That composite thing we call "society" is a vast personality and represents not the evolution of man but merely the *evolution of his thought*.

Thus the Individual includes society as the ocean includes the wave. Nature, which includes all social phenomena is the negative representation to the Individual of himself.

In other words man can arrive at the realization of what he *is*, only by the process of realizing what he *is not*. He cannot realize his Absolute nature without realizing all degrees of Relativity,

Thus arises the dual aspect of man, the interplay of the positive and negative forces within him which constitutes the apparent conflict and confusion in the world, of good and evil, of pain and pleasure and all "the pairs of opposites" which perplex the mind.

The Universe in reality, is an expression of Love and that which appears to the mind as pain and limitation, is, but the negative aspect of Love which is Law. Love can be realized only through Law. It is the ignorance of the

law and our resistance to it which causes all the pain. The perception of law is the *beginning* of wisdom. *Obedience to Law is Freedom.*

Man holds his account with persons, with society, with government, but his account is really with the Supreme Self, with God, Whose agent all men and all things are.

Competition and war lie not between him and his fellow-creatures as he supposes, but between him and his own Supreme Self. It is man resisting the Law of his own being. Persons, societies, and things are but the agents of his own true Self. Man is ever and always dealing with himself no matter under what form he may be disguised. In warring with society as with another person he is only warring with himself. Man can see, feel, think, know, nothing but himself. The Law of his being is unchanging, and eternal. It executes equal and exact Justice everywhere and at all times if man but had the eyes to see it. Universal Law can have no other meaning than Universal justice. Without Law, without Justice everywhere and at all times, the Universe could not exist an instant.

It is the failure to perceive the necessary fact of Eternal and Universal Justice, which fills the minds of good men with confusion in dealing with the problems of the world.

To know and obey the Law is the highest wisdom. It is to realize the union of man with God—to realize the Individual Self.

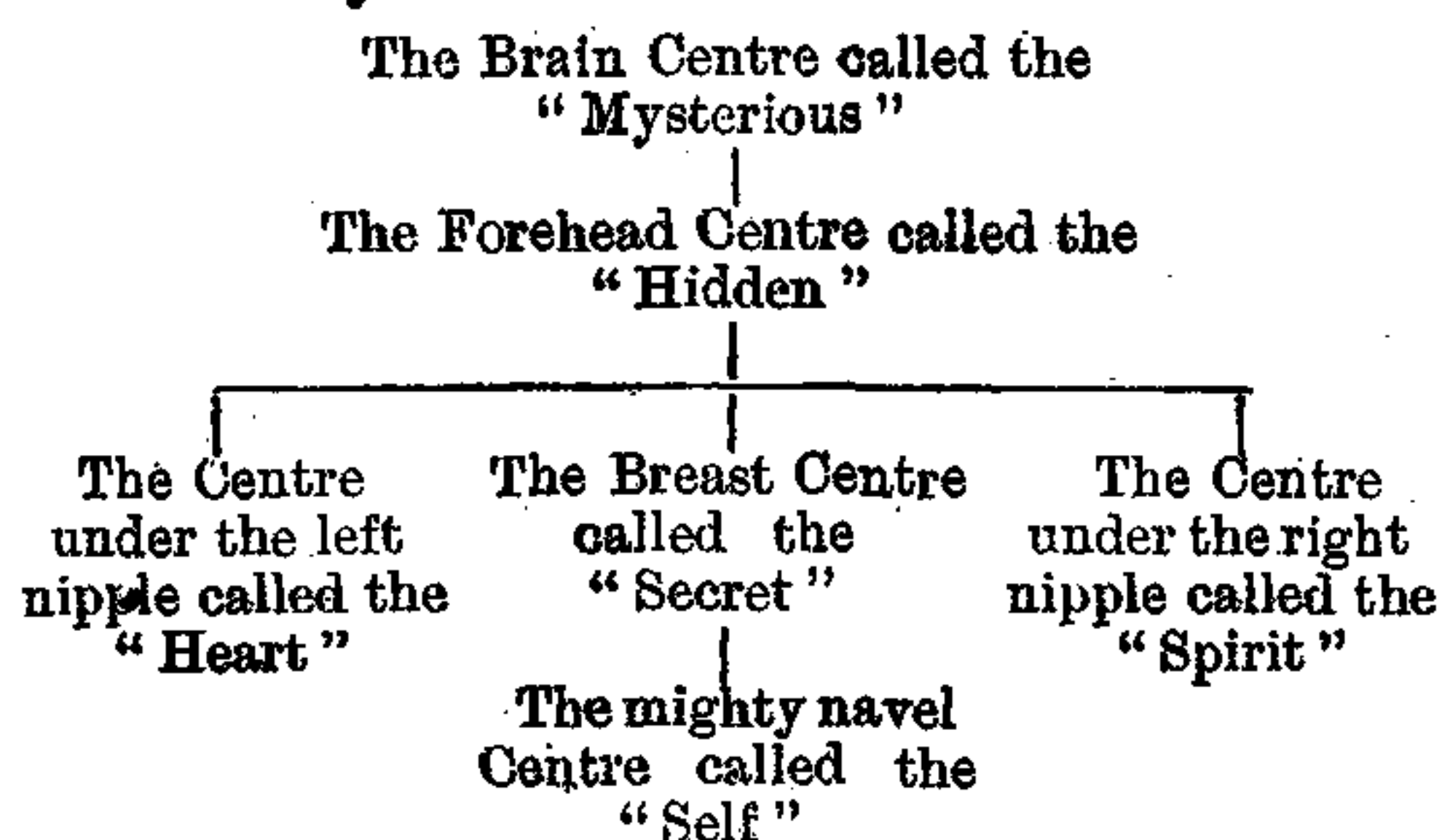
J. G. STEVENSON.

ISLAM :

A MIGHTY TESTIMONY TO VEDANTISM

(Concluded from page 76 Vol. III.)

THE finer instructions as to Self, imparted to a disciplined student in Islam, are purely Vedantic in their effect, although the procedure varies in certain points. For instance, Islam does not recognise Moorti Poojun, as a means of concentrating the mind and promoting Bhakti, but in some well-organized spiritual fraternities of Islam, the object served by Moorti Poojun, is very well achieved by means of meditating on the Guru, who for the time being is regarded the disciple's all-in-all. The disciple is expected to lose his individuality, as it were, in that of the Guru, and become selfless, so to speak. Once thus divested of all ideas of his own separate entity, he is spiritually united, by means of further fixed processes of meditating on the Prophet, to the latter, and later on to God. When thus united to, or lost in the God-head, he is declared to be a *Mowah-hid*, or the Master of Oneness. You may go by this way in Hinduism, or by that way in Islam, but the object, the goal is one and the same in both the Systems, *viz.*, the Realisation of Oneness. The "Raja-Yoga" instructions for the realisation of Self, in Islam, are similarly only nominally different from those in the Mother System. In Islam six centres of Light are recognized in the body of man—as under :



By means of fixed methods of practice these Centres are discovered and the inside of man becomes perfectly illumined. Later on the same illumination is discovered outside also, which results in the realization of the sameness and Oneness of Light or Illumination, completing the course of the student in becoming a *Mowah-hid*.

For the disciplined student of a philosophical turn of mind, the solution of the single question,

"What am I" ?

forms the basis of the Realization of Self, the combined aim of Vedanta and Islam. The following mysteries are solved under the specific directions of the Guru :

I am not the body,
I am not the senses,
I am not the mind,
I am not this,
I am not that,

till at last the Reality is discovered, which is in every "I," in every body, everywhere. It is the Self. It is It.

It may be argued that many philosophical discussions on the question of Oneness, which have been so minutely gone into by the early thinkers of India, have been apparently left untouched in the Scriptures of Musalmans, but it is distinctly to be remembered that a line has been very judiciously drawn in Islam, between the subjects to be generally and publicly preached and those to be confided to the deserving and the chosen few. Almost all the finer instructions as to the Realization of Self are embodied in what is called the "Ilmi-Seena," the Knowledge to be kept within the breast. Such instructions are im-

parted to the student by the Guru and are regarded as a Trust. During the last few centuries, however, some such instructions have been written under the category of "Malfoozat"—sayings of saints, and contain valuable stores of real Islamic thought, which to any careful student, will be proved to be purely Vedantic also.

The peculiarity alluded to above, of reserving the finer instructions in the manner indi-

cated, has at least served one purpose. It has made the general instructions of Islam much more practical than would have been the case, had the *fine* been mixed with the *gross*. This has been the chief distinction in Islam.

It is my belief that Islam, has amply fulfilled the mission of Vedanta, and has made *Religion*, fairly practical.

MOHOMEDANAND.

TWO DREAMS

I

I WAS with two or three friends, under a tree, in a forest, discussing some religious questions. One of the friends, the most intimate, asked me to fetch a flower or some other thing which was visible at a little distance. On going towards the object, I saw some wild boars, and I avoided them. I met them again on my return and cautiously went out of their way. Then, suddenly, I heard my friends crying to me, "Cheetah! Cheetah!" I looked up and saw my friends esconced behind a tree; but the animal, which was now rapidly bounding towards me was not a cheetah, but a unicorn. My heart was in a trepidation. I knew that a tiger was to be held back by looking in the face and an elephant escaped from by jumping into a pit. But a unicorn! This was a new case! In utter despair, a story by Swami Vivekânanda came to my mind, of a Sadhu, attacked by a tiger, who unflinchingly said, "Shivoham, Shivoham (I am God, I am God)" to his last breath. And as the animal pounced upon me I uttered "Shivoham" thrice, and woke up with the strength-giving words pleasantly ringing in my ears even as my heart was still beating with fear.

II

[In the early part of the night I had some

domestic trouble and my mind was sorely tried with that constant problem of mine of how to get beyond all evil]

A forest again. And friends perhaps. I was walking along and I suddenly heard anxious voices exclaiming, "A lion's cave! A lion's cave!" The warning came too late. In a second, I was at the mouth of the cave, and the lion saw me. There being no possibility of escape, I made up my mind readily to be a prey to the lion. I just reflected that the pain might be very excruciating at first, as when an electric current is passed through the body, but I would soon become insensible. As the lion approached to devour me I turned my back to him, for I knew that animals of that genus attacked from behind. The lion fell violently upon my back, but he could not get a bite at me however hard he tried. Astonished, he asked me, "Well, do you possess any *siddhis* (powers)? Take care how you trifle with me!" I replied meekly that I knew of no *siddhis* and I was quite willing to be eaten up by his majesty, and again I turned my back to him. He strove with all his might to get his teeth into my muscles, but in vain. And I woke up.

The above were two actual dreams of a friend of mine—*Kidi*.

ADVAITAVADA

A lecture delivered on the 14th April 1899 by the Swami Abhayananda, at the Jagannath College, Dacca.

THE sun in its radiance shines for one purpose only; the huge sea rolls its waves for one purpose only; the storm rages, the lightning flashes, the birds sing, the flowers bloom but for one purpose—one only, namely, to free the mind of man from the shackles and bonds of ignorance, from the bonds of the objects of sense; in other words to work out the salvation of man. All nature, from the lowest to the highest type, is enlisted for that one purpose,—the salvation of man, the raising of the vibrations of the mind to the vibrations of the soul. In my last speech I mentioned what Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya Philosophy, says: “Nature (Prakriti) has been created for the soul (Purusha) and not the soul for nature.” Nature is necessary to point out the way of Freedom to man and Freedom means Salvation.

In your epic poem the ‘Ramayana,’ we have a good example of this. There *Rama* stands for the soul,—the Atman, and *Sita* for the mind. *Sita*, the mind was captured, forcibly taken away by *Ravana*, the king of the demons. The lower mind succumbed to the senses and became enslaved by the objective world. The mind was in bondage. Then *Rama*, the soul, had to conquer,—to liberate *Sita*—his own shadow, his negative, his wife. In this undertaking, all nature is enlisted, all work on *Rama*’s side, all animals toil for *Rama* and form an army for rescuing *Sita*. The leader of the army was the

ape *Hanuman*—the ape, the greatest of organised life beneath man. Even the little squirrel furnished its quota of help and brought a few grains of sand to build the bridge for connecting India to Ceylon where *Sita* lay in captivity. *Hanuman* the general of the army of animals, and the mightiest, wrenched mountains from their bases and sank them into the sea to lay a firm foundation to the bridge. In *Rama*’s war, all Nature fought, all the powers acted with one object in view, *viz.*, the liberation of the mind;—for mind which is material perishes; that which truly exists is the Soul or the Atman. I quote *Kapila* again: “It is the mind that enslaves the man, it is also the mind that shall liberate the man.”

There are many schools of theology which hold that the soul has had a beginning, was created, that it may be educated, and become purified. The Oriental schools holding that ideal fail to discriminate between *Jivatman* and *Atman*. On the plane of objectivity, mind had a beginning,—commenced to evolve in the lower organisms. As soon as sensation of pleasure or pain takes place in the lower expressions of organised life, then mind comes into existence. The theory of evolution has been popularised in Europe and in America by *Darwin*, specially by his great work the “Descent of Man.” Now the theory of evolution has been fashionable. Universities in Europe and in America teach *Darwinism*. *Darwin* says, “Man

is the evolution of the mollusk." University men adopt this without much reasoning; and teach it because it has been accepted by common assent. The object of evolution is the developing of of consciousness of man's individuality.

But why is the developing of man's individuality necessary?

God—Brahman—(do not misunderstand me, by God here I mean Brahman)—is *One*. No man can think of God unless as a Being which is perfect. A being imperfect never can appeal to the consciousness of man as being God. Inferior Gods are found in mythology: but these have no claim to perfection. If God is perfect, then He is infinite and cannot be limited. To satisfy the mind of man, God must be a Perfect Being. There is no compromise. Either Brahman is perfect or it is not *Brahman*. The requisite of perfection is non-limitation. God must be unlimited. Brahman must be simple and not a compound. It must be infinite, unbounded. It is erroneous to say that the mind being finite cannot conceive of infinitude. Victor Cousin, one of the greatest of French Philosophers, an eminent Orientalist, declared that mind cannot comprehend the finite. For example, I see the yard before me; it is bounded by a wall. My mind inquires: "What is back of that wall?"—"A garden." "What is back of that garden?"—"A house." "What is back of that house?"—"A field."—And on and on the mind will go inquiring and never rest satisfied with finiteness. God therefore is Infinite, *i.e.* All-embracing—All-containing. This is plain reasoning. Let us take another illustration. On the plane of objectivi-

ty, the sea is infinite. But the waves on its surface are finite. The waves therefore do not exist. The sea exists because it is enduring, but the waves are not enduring. But God is absolutely Absolute. (By God, remember, I mean Brahman). In Him there is no relativity;—outside Him there is nothing. The eminent French Philosopher whom the ignorant call an Atheist says:—"There is but one Principle, there cannot be two; because if there be two, they must be either similar or different; if different, one must destroy the other; if similar, they are but one."

Brahman, the One, the absolutely Infinite,—is the essence from which all things manifested proceed. I deny that Brahman is conscious, for this would imply some thing out side of Itself of which It be conscious. I deny that Brahman is thinking, for this would imply a something external to Itself of which it be thinking. I deny that Brahman has knowledge, for this would affirm that there is outside of It something to be known! Brahman is not conscious, but It is the essence of consciousness; Brahman is not thinking, but It is the essence of thought; Brahman has no knowledge, but It is the essence of knowledge! Brahman *does not do* any action. IT SIMPLY IS. Says Krishna to Radha: "O Radha, Radha! take this soul that trembles in Life's dim midnight to thy golden house!" Radha is the mind, the projection of the essence which is the Spirit. Krishna begs of Radha, because without Radha, He cannot express or manifest Himself; He *cannot be known*; but as soon as Radha is acting, the spirit is projected

out and becomes manifest. Without Radha, consciousness exists, but there is no one to be conscious and no object to be conscious of.

Let us take an illustration from science. Everything that we see around us, is solar rays. This college is solar rays; this platform is solar rays, the seats on which you sit are solar rays, yet these rays manifest in different forms apparently separate one from the other. Fichte, the great German Vedantist, says, "The ego, without the non-ego exists not. The non-ego is produced in order that the ego, through the resistance of the non-ego may know its own activity."

Let us take another illustration. Thick clouds sometimes gather and entirely conceal the sun. But these clouds are nothing but emanations,—the sun is obscured by its own shadow. The projected is the negative side of the projector, both complements form one body. Hegel says: "The Proposition is composed of its position and its negation. The negation is part of the Proposition and completes it." My mind can grasp only what it can embrace, if my vision be broad, it embraces much, if small, it embraces little.

Brahman, the One, through the laws of Its own being throws Itself into manifestation. The One becomes the many, just as on the plane of objectivity, the sun becomes the myriads of beings in the Universe.

Objective manifestation proceeds by cyclic motion. The seed becomes the tree, the tree becomes the seed. All things flow from the One, all things return to the One. The Spirit, Krishna,

manifests through Radha or Nature; the Positive element manifests through the negative.

The spider draws out of its own bosom the substance wherewith to spin its web. The web seems to be different from the spider, but in reality, the web is the spider's own substance. It can stand apart, can look at itself projected in a form different from itself. The hair growing on your head, is but your own being projecting itself out. If you sell your hair,—you sell your own being (they do so in America). Thus one substance gets transmuted into another; all elements in Nature are mutually convertible. This is called in physical science the "correlation of forces." The Hindus of ancient times understood the process of evolution from the finer to the grosser element and that of involution from the grosser to the finer. A noted French astronomer, Camille Flammarion says, "Matter is imponderable." For ages and ages, scientists have laboured at finding the weight of the earth, and now we discover that it has no weight at all, that lifted to a certain altitude, it transmutes into gas. Out of gas it came, to gas it returns by the eternal law of cyclic motion.

Through evolution, the simple type becomes complex—consciousness unfolds and individuality grows into perfection. Animals, plants, and minerals—everything is conscious, because Brahman, the all in all is the essence of consciousness. But man alone is conscious of being, conscious of some thing. In the animal kingdom, we find self-assertiveness, the strong preying upon the weak. There might is right. But as we

advance and reach to the human, we enter into another phase of life where Love instead of brutal strength is expected to be the motive of action. A man who oppresses the weak in any way, that man is not on the *human* plane, he is still on the animal plane. Will an ape understand what a man can understand? Man is at once the evolution of the spirit into matter and the involution of matter in spirit. Your great saviour or Avatar Buddha,—Buddha! that glorious star in the sky of India, that holy man who was ready to give his life for an ant, was a true man. So were Sankara, Ramanuja and Chaitanya. On the plane of religious expression when the soul whispers within man, instead of “might” constituting “right,” it is Love that constitutes right. This is an inversion of the process of evolution from the lowest organism to man,—being the involution of man the shadow, into spirit, the Reality. In Nature we find that the shadow reflects invertedly, up side down. Trees on the edge of a river, reflect upside down, the base of the real tree also forms the base of its shadow. So on the lower plane, where might makes right, we have the Spirit reflected into matter; but on the higher plane, “might” gives way to Love, the lover and beloved become one, spirit and matter are united and the happiness of the strong is to die for the weak.

The universe is God in manifestation. The clouds are God in manifestation, the sun is God in manifestation. It is always God or the son of God that we see in Nature. Lord Krishna says, “I am seated in all beings animate or inanimate.” All manifestation is God.

God having become manifested, having become objectified, is now an object of worship and adoration. Before the son of God I bow my head down, I worship him, I worship all in the universe, because all is God. I worship all by serving all, I worship the animal, by serving the animal.

God is infinite, but my love made Him finite; objectified Him, so that I may adore the Eternal Principle. In Vishnu, and His august Incarnation Krishna, we worship love immeasurable that preserves creation. In Shiva, we worship strength, will, power by which things inferior are destroyed for the production of things superior. God in manifestation, or God Personal is that which can be worshipped. Brahman the Impersonal cannot be worshipped, because It is infinite. The infinite can never be known, but can only be realised. Only God can see God. If I see God everywhere, in every man, I serve God by serving the children of God. If I offer a helping hand to the feeble, I serve God. If I see a man hungry or suffering, I suffer, I give him help and serve God. St. Paul says—“If I give all I have to the poor, if I give my body to be burned and have not charity, I have nothing.” Only through Love, only by serving all can we be saved. In your epic “Ramayana,” Hanuman worshipped God by serving Rama; and after Sita’s rescue, in presence of all nature, man and beast, Rama took Hanuman in his arms. The animal was raised by serving man. Through service alone can we become emancipated, can we grow spiritually, can reach the goal of life which is Liberation, or Freedom!

The more you recognise God in every-

thing, the more Krishna is within you ; the less you see Krishna in others, the less Krishna is within you. Love, at first appears on the plane of selfishness, the love of one's own self. Gradually a man takes a mate, and his love is divided and increases, then that love extends to children, to the whole family, then to the whole province,—to the whole country ; then to animals (as in the case of Buddha), then to the plants, to the minerals, to the whole Universe ; and he becomes one with the Universe. We know nothing, until we become it. Man is said to have been created after the image of God. He is faithful to the image, only when he reaches to Unity and recognizes no separateness ; for God is one. Lord Krishna teaching Arjuna says that desire causes re-birth. “Is there to be *re-embodiment* always?” questions Arjuna. “Yes,” replies the teacher, “always, so long as there are desires in the man.” “Is there no hope of deliverance?”

pleads Arjuna. “I am going to reveal to you a great and profound secret, the mystery of mysteries. To reach Perfection, you must conquer the *science* of Unity !” The realization of Oneness, Advaita, is the only road to Liberation. When we reach the Unity through Love, we fear nothing, for all things are within us, we do not *do*, we *are* ; we shine as does the sun by the power of our own being. Our Love is that of the mother, the all-embracing, all-sacrificing, all protecting mother's love ! Mother ! *The crowning* of the efforts of Nature ! Mother ! The glorification of creation !

To be *One*, to feel absolute identification with all beings and things in the universe is to tread the path of Advaita. This path is entered by the help of Love ; it is trodden by the guidance of Love, it is achieved by the Absolute Realization of the One, Infinite, *Unbounded*, All-comprehending Brahman, which is the essence of Love.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ON PLAGUE SERVICE

EN Good Friday, March 31st, Swami Sadananda began work in the Bosepara Bustee, with 7 scavengers.

Thursday, April 6th, our appeal for funds was published in the English papers, and Rs. 235 were added to our fund.

Monday April 6th, we raised our staff to twelve.

On Saturday the 15th, we had almost finished the Neekiripara Bustee which was originally in terrible condition. Swamis Shivananda, Nityananda and Atmananda also shared the work of direction with

Swami Sadananda, from this time on.

Saturday April 15th, Dr. Mahoney, Dt. Medical Officer, made a second inspection of the work done and spoke very encouragingly.

Monday April 17th, Mr. Bright, Chairman of the Corporation, came and looked at it personally, and on

Wednesday the 9th we started work at the earnest request of some residents, on a long-neglected drain in the Moonshi Bazar Bustee at Sealdah. This was a gigantic piece of work, however, and we

found it necessary to engage extra coolies in order to carry it through even in that temporary manner which has been possible.

Sunday, April 30th, the Sealdah work ended, as far as it could be done by ourselves and today, May the 1st, our gang has returned to work in its old field of action in and about Ward I. The actual results to be got from this labour are obviously very small and temporary in character. Yet we feel that it is a privilege we would not readily forego, to have the chance of doing even so much.

A more permanent value we trust attaches to that movement amongst the students which was inaugurated by Swami Vivekananda's stirring words to them from the chair on the occasion of Sister Nivedita's address at the Classic Theatre, Saturday, April 22nd.

About fifteen students signified their intention of forming themselves into a small band of helpers, for door to door visitation of huts in selected Bustees, for the distribution of sanitary literature and for quiet words of advice and counsel. This little

group undertakes to meet on Sundays at the Mission House, 57 Ramkanto Bose's Lane, and we sincerely hope that something steady and earnest, may be the result of it.

This is an appropriate occasion too, to mention the great kindness and sympathy of many influential Brahmos of all sections. This sympathy is likely to bear fruit of an important kind, as a committee is being formed amongst these ladies and gentlemen to take a great step towards the amelioration of conditions for the poor.

Surely one of the great secrets of the weakness of India lies in the fact that the motherland has never in the past found means to voice in any special way her love of the feeble and the outcast and the disinherited amongst her children. Let us pray that we, of this new generation may live to see the beginning of a different state of things. We mean to hold on to the priceless traditions of our national past, but we mean to create others too, just as good, to feed our national future!

Shri Shri Ramakrishna jayati.

N.

OUR NEW YORK LETTER

DURING February and March the Vedânta work in New York made great progress. The audiences at the lectures grew larger, and the classes drew an increased attendance of real students of the philosophy. The longer Swâmi Abhedânanda stays with us, the better he understands the needs of his hearers and the more satisfactorily he is able to meet them. He is mindful of Western prejudices and carefully avoids giving offence to them, while at the same

time skilfully presenting the teachings of Vedânta. New people are constantly being attracted, while a fair proportion of earlier hearers remain firm in their adherence to the teachings.

Those most in earnest, attend the student's classes on Monday evenings and Saturday mornings and there learn something of the practical side of Vedânta. To learn even a little of meditation is a wonderful help to the

average American mind, all unused as it is to anything of the kind. In the rush and whirl of our lives here, there is but little time for pause and none at all for calm retirement into Self, unless one is very determined to secure the opportunity to rest and think. No one can doubt that such a change must be highly beneficial and can hardly fail to accomplish excellent results.

During March we have once a week had an evening devoted to an informal social gathering of the students of Vedânta. This has done much to bring us nearer together and into closer touch with the Swâmi, and has been a great assistance in promoting kindly feeling, as if we were all of one family. In consequence the work is being better supported than ever before, and we are now looking forward to a successful season next winter. It is our purpose to have the lectures and classes begin a month earlier and continue a month later than they did this winter, as many have felt that our season was all too short.

On the occasion of Sri Râmakrishna's birthday festival, the N. Y. Brahmacharins held a small festival in observance of the day. We chose Sunday evening the 12th March, as being almost the same time as the morning of the 13th in Calcutta, there being nearly twelve hours difference in your favor. Swâmi Abhedananda met with us, and we had the picture of the Master in the midst of a perfect grove of flowers and fruits. Around him were all the photographs of the Swamis which had been sent to us, and incense filled the air. The Swami read to us in Sanskrit and then translated some stotras, the same you use in Calcutta on this occasion, following them with passages from the Life of Sri Ramakrishna. After this he chanted the Gayâtri and some prayers and then we all meditated on the divine nature of the Master and on his blessed teachings. It was a most happy event and we were all filled with joy and peace. Some of us meditated together again on the 19th

March, the day of the Calcutta festival. How much we owe to that ever-blessed life!

On Easter Sunday when the great Christian festival is observed, Swami Abhedananda initiated four Brahmacharins. It seemed peculiarly appropriate that Western disciples should take their vows on this greatest of our religious festivals. It was an occasion of much quiet happiness and harmonious communion. The Swami made the ceremony very simple, but it was none the less impressive. The small altar was covered with ochre cloth and decorated with flowers. The fire surmounted it, while just beside it was the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna, before which flowers and fruits were offered, while the fragrance of some Eastern incense filled the air. The Swami sat close beside the altar fire and each student repeated the vows after him in turn, with the customary invocation and oblation of butter into the fire. After all the vows had been taken, the Swami gave to each Brahmacharin a new name. There were Satya Kâma (Seeker of Truth); Guru Dâsa (Servant of spiritual director); Mukti Kâma (Seeker of Freedom) and Shânti Kâmâ (Seeker of peace). Some of the Brahmachârin of Swâmi Vivekânanda were present, but no one who could not understand and sympathise with the occasion. These meetings of the disciples are most helpful and serve to make us more devoted to Vedânta and to the teachings of Sri Râmakrishna. The bond of fellowship between the Swâmi and his students has been drawn closer this season and all are sorry to have even a temporary break in our pleasant meetings. However, we are trying to bear it with equanimity, looking forward to a happy reunion next autumn. Change is the lot of all things mortal and we must learn to fix our hearts only on that which cannot change,—on that Eternal Background of the fleeting panorama, which we call "life."

NĀNĀ KATHĀ

UNDER pressure of medical advice and urgent calls of English friends, the Swami Vivekananda will start for England on the 20th of June next. We are very glad to inform our readers, the Swamiji is much better and stronger now and we earnestly trust the voyage will restore him completely. He will be accompanied by the Swami Turiyananda.

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THE SWAMI AKHANDANDA acknowledges with thanks receipt from H. H. the Nawab Bahadur of Murshidabad, of Rs. 200 and from the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, of Rs. 100, contributions to the Orphanage Building Fund. He has also received Rs. 25 and a few clothings for the inmates of the Orphanage from Rao Yogendra Narayana Ray Saheb of Lalgola. The Rao Saheb has also promised to help the Orphanage with an annual contribution of Rs. 100, 48 maunds of grain, and clothings.

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FROM a detailed "Account of the receipts and disbursements of the Murshidabad Orphanage from May 1898 to April 1899," sent later, we find, Rs. 100 more has been received from various sources for the Building Fund, thus bringing it up to Rs. 400. The gross receipt of the year amounted to Rs. 640-13, and the expenditures to Rs. 624-5-3, leaving a balance of Rs. 16-7-9.

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THE Gouranga Samaj is to be congratulated on the religious fervour and enthusiasm it succeeded in awakening in the hearts of many worldly-minded Hindus in the capital city, by organizing *Sankirtan* parties on the last birthday anniversary of Gouranga or Chaitanya—one of the greatest religious teachers of Bengal. The ceremony consisted only of singing religious songs, calculated to lift the soul to Hari or God, as the being who cleanses man of his sins, by numerous parties of people assembled in a spacious park in Calcutta, in its native quarter. That many who came to be on-lookers, joined one or the other choir, and

were visibly affected by the spiritual atmosphere created by the loud chanting of the name of Hari by thousands of men, can be easily accepted as a statement of real fact. But when the Gouranga Samaj comes forward and tells us that by this means a door to salvation to the Calcutta populace has been opened, it makes a demand upon our intelligence and experience, which we cannot tolerate. The Bengalee is a creature of impulses and keenly susceptible to the fascination of music. When he, finding himself in the presence of a *Sankirtan* party, joins it and sings and dances with new enthusiasm, he simply betrays his love of music and religious impulsiveness more than anything else. The *Sankirtan* has no abiding influence on his higher nature. It is very serviceable in giving him hours of innocent enjoyment, or, at best, a sort of spiritual exhilaration, but it is not to him a solemn and sound religious exercise that steadily reforms his world-absorbed soul. The *Sankirtan* has been prompted by and feeds the Bengalee's religious sentimentality, but it does not help in making him truly and deeply religious. *Sankirtan* is taken by many to be religious but, in effect, it is a mere religious dilettantism. The average Bengalee *Sankirtanist* is not found to be a man of that high character which the truly God-devoted man is expected to be. In fact, a too free indulgence in devout and enthusiastic *Sankirtan* has been many a time found to flourish with consummate roguery. I am distinctly of opinion that Vaishnavite or Gourangian *Sankirtan* will not save the Bengalee, but will rather be a stumbling block in the path of his salvation by perpetuating some of the weaknesses and imperfections of his character. If however, the Gouranga Samaj aims at being popular, it cannot do better than extol *Sankirtan*, and propagate it, for it is this kind of shallow and superficial religiousness that eminently suits the sentimental Bengalee. But, if, on the other hand its aim is religious reform, it should inaugurate movements that, consistently with the teachings of Gouranga, might be calculated to make the Bengalee religious, not merely in sentiment, but in life, and in spirit and in truth.—*Bengal Correspondent of the Advocate.*